

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 DRC-01 EA-11

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R 180727Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4796

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 4832

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: PAKISTAN QUARTERLY INTERNAL POLITICAL ASSESSMENT

REF: ISLAMABAD 4800

SUMMARY: CRACKS WITHIN THE PEOPLES PARTY (PPP) HAVE SURFACED DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS, REVEALING DISARRAY WITHIN THE RULING GROUP AND THE DIFFICULTY OF ONE-MAN RULE WHICH BHUTTO HAS ESTABLISHED. MUD SLINGING BY VARIOUS PPP PERSONALITIES IN THE PUNJAB HAS PROBABLY DAMAGED THE PARTY'S NATIONAL IMAGE, DISRUPTED TO SOME EXTENT CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, AND LED TO FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF REORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY. BHUTTO'S DIFFICULTIES IN THE OTHER THREE PROVINCES IN PAKISTAN APPEAR LESS URGENT, ALTHOUGH PROBLEMS EXIST FOR THE PRIME MINISTER IN SIND, NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, AND BALUCHISTAN. BY AND LARGE, OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES ARE QUIET

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AND HAVE FAILED TO EXPLOIT THE CONFLICTS WITHIN THE PPP.

NATIONALLY, LABOR IS BEGINNING TO BECOME RESTIVE, SUGGESTING THAT ANOTHER WAVE OF STRIKES MAY BE FORTHCOMING. THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CHANGE IN ARMY ATTITUDES IN RECENT MONTHS. WE DON'T FORESEE MUCH SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL EQUATION OVER COMING MONTHS ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE NEW FACES IN SOME MINISTRIES IN THE CENTER AND THE PROVINCES AND PERHAPS MORE VIOLENCE THAN USUAL IN URBAN AREAS. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN PREPARED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THOUGHTFUL INPUTS FROM THE THREE CONSULATES. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE OUR LAST DOMESTIC POLITICAL ASSESSEMENT IN FEBRUARY, SOME VULNERABILITIES HAVE BEEN REVEALED IN THE RULING PEOPLES PARTY AND BHUTTO'S GOVERNMENT. INTENSE PARTY FACTIONALISM, PRESENT IN THE PARTY SINCE ITS INCEPTION, SURFACED IN THE PUNJAB AND TO A LESSER EXTENT IN SIND, TARNISHING THE ALREADY SOMEWHAT FADED IMAGE OF THE PROPLES PARTY AS THE FIRST PROGRAM-MOTIVATED POLITICAL GROUPING IN PAKISTAN. IN THE PROCESS OF MUTUAL MUDSLINGING, PROVINCIAL PPP LEADERS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO BE AS POWER-SEEKING AND CORRUPT AS TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS. BHUTTO HAS PUBLICALLY STAYED OUTSIDE THE FRAY, YET THE UNSEEMLY IN-FIGHTING HAS PROBABLY BLURRED HIS OWN IMAGE AS WELL AS THE PARTY'S BECAUSE TO MOST PAKISTANIS THE TWO ARE SYNONOMOUS. SOME WILL ALSO WONDER WHETHER BHUTTO MAY BE SLIPPING IN HIS HANDLING OF THE COUNTRY'S AFFAIRS.

2. BHUTTO ESSENTIALLY SEEMS TO HAVE USED OCCASION AS HIS CHIEF TOOL IN SEEKING TO STILL RIVALRIES IN THE PUNJAB PPP. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY SHOWN A RELUCTANCE TO MANIPULATE FACTIONS AND PERSONALITIES UNDER THE PARTY UMBRELLA. IN THE PUNJAB, HOWEVER, HIS TACTIC HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATIVELY LESS SUCCESSFUL THAN HERETOFORE. THE KHAR AFFAIR HAS SHOWN THE PPP IN GREAT DISARRAY", WITH BHUTTO NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO EXERT FULL CONTROL OVER PARTY AFFAIRS, AND HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT PARTY IDEOLOGY IS STILL SUBORDINATE TO THE TRADITIONAL POLITICS OF PERSONALITIES. THE AFFAIR HAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED THE WEAKNESS OF A HIGHLY-CENTRALIZED POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH REFERS ALL IMPORTANT DECISIONS AND EVEN MANY

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RELATIVELY TRIVIAL MATTERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. DESPITE HIS ENERGY, BRILLIANCE AND HARD WORK, BHUTTO IS EVIDENTLY FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT PAKISTAN FOREIGN POLICY, ORCHESTRATE PROVINCIAL POLITICS, KEEP AN EYE ON THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND THE ARMY, RUN THE POLICE AND THE VARIOUS INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, REWARD THE FAITHFUL AND PUNISH HIS OPPONENTS, ETC, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A STEADILY DIMINISHING NUMBER OF CLOSE ADVISERS AND CONFIDANTES.

3. BHUTTO IMPLIED IN AN APRIL 25 INTERVIEW WITH BBC THAT HE HAD REMOVED KHAR BECAUSE KHAR'S STRONG-ARM TACTICS FOR CONTROLLING THE PUNJAB WERE NO LONGER REQUIRED BY "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS" PREVAILING IN THAT PROVINCE. THE SAME CONSIDERATION HAS ALSO BEEN CITED AS A PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE EARLIER REMOVAL OF MUMTAZ BHUTTO, HIS COUSIN, FROM THE SIND CHIEF MINISTERSHIP. PRESUMABLY THE CHANGED "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS" INCLUDED VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FORCE FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND THE ADOPTION OF A CONSTITUTION WHICH INSURES THE BHUTTO REGIME'S TENURE UNTIL 1977.

4. WHILE BHUTTO HAS DOUBTLESS GAUGED HIS OPPOSITION CORRECTLY, HE SEEMS TO HAVE MISCALCULATED WITH HIS FRIENDS INsofar AS PUNJABI POLITICS IS CONCERNED. THE INTENSE PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND CHRONIC UNDISCIPLINE IN THE PUNJAB ARE USUALLY KEPT IN CHECK ONLY BY STRONG LEADERSHIP AND STRONG-ARM TACTICS. ANY WEAKNESS DETECTED IN THE LEADERSHIP LEADS TO ASSERTIVENESS BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS SEEKING TO PROMOTE THEIR INTERESTS. NEVERTHELESS, PUNJAB PPP'S FACTIONALISM, WHILE DISRUPTIVE, IS, IN OUR VIEW, CONTAINABLE. BHUTTO STILL HAS NOT UNLIMBERED THE MANY COERCIVE WEAPONS AVAILABLE TO HIM. ASIDE FROM IMAGERY, HOWEVER, THE PUNJAB INFIGHTING HAD ITS COSTS, DISTRACTING PROVINCIAL

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND BHUTTO PERSONALLY FROM OTHER PRESSING BUSINESS, POSTPONING BHUTTO'S APPARENT PLANS TO RESTRUCTURE THE PPP AND DELAYING ANY NEW POLITICAL INNOVATIONS.

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5. THE KHAR PHENOMENON APPEARS TO HAVE PEAKED ON APRIL 30, AND IN THE EMBASSY VIEW, NEVER POSED A REAL THREAT TO BHUTTO OR HIS CONTROL IN THE PUNJAB. NONETHELESS, THE POLITICAL SCENE IN PUNJAB MUST NOT BE PLEASANT FOR BHUTTO TO VIEW, WITH ROUGHLY ONE QUARTER OF THE PUNJAB PPP ORGANIZATION STILL SUPPORTING KHAR. THERE ARE THREE BASIC COURSES THE PRIME MIN CAN TAKE IN THE PROVINCE: LET THE PRESENT MUDDLE CONTINUE; REORGANIZE THE PARTY INTO A MASS-MOVEMENT IDEOLOGICAL-TYPE PARTY; OR CONDUCT PARTY ELECTIONS AND UPDATE THE NOW LARGELY IMPLEMENTED PARTY MANIFESTO. ALL THREE CARRY THE DANGER OF FURTHER DEFLECTIONS AND SPLINTERING OF THE PARTY. WE WOULD EXPECT BHUTTO TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IN CHANGING HIS PRESENT COURSE UNLESS HIS HAND IS FORCED. FOR HIS PART KHAR, ALTHOUGH STILL PRO-

CLAIMING LOYALTY TO BHUTTO WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CONSORTING WITH OPPONENTS OF BHUTTO, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE EXPECTS TO CAUSE TROUBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE FORTH-COMING BUDGET SESSION OF THE PUNJAB ASSEMBLY AND THAT HE PLANS AN EXTENSIVE SPEAKING TOUR OF NOT ONLY THE PUNJAB BUT OTHER PROVINCES AS WELL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 4832

6. WHILE THE RURAL PEASANTRY, WHO FORM THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PROVINCE'S POPULATION, STILL SUPPORT THE PPP, DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE PARTY AMONG VARIOUS URBAN GROUPS EVIDENTLY HAS GROWN: LABOR, STUDENTS AND SOME OF THE MIDDLE CLASS ELITE WHO HAVE EXTENSIVE CONNECTIONS WITH THE ARMYGH LABOR, IN PARTICULAR, SEEMS POISED FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF STRIKES. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS FAILED TO EXPLOIT THIS DISILLUSIONMENT, HOWEVER, ON EVEN THE PPP INFIGHTING. ONLY THE TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL HAS SHOWN MUCH ENERGY IN RECENT WEEKS, ALTHOUGH NAP HAS SURPRISINGLY PICKED UP SOME SUPPORTERS IN PUNJAB URBAN AREAS.

7. SOMEWHAT HAPPIER CONDITIONS PREVAIL FOR BHUTTO IN THE OTHER THREE PROVINCES, ALTHOUGH EACH HAS ITS OWN PECULIAR PROBLEMS. IN HIS NATIVE SIND, THE PPP REIGNS UNCHALLENGED IN THE ASSEMBLY AND ENJOYS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT IN RURAL AREAS. SOME RIPPLES IN THE OTHERWISE RELATIVELY SERENE PICTURE HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY OUSTED CHIEF MINISTER
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MUMTAZ BHUTTO, BUT THEY ARE MINOR COMPARED TO THE TEMPEST KICKED UP BY KHAR.

8. THE PPP IN SIND, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE CORRUPT, HAS NEVERTHELESS APPARENTLY RETAINED ITS PUBLIC IMAGE OF INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF COMMON MAN. SINDHI NATIONALISTS ARE QUIET, APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH THE AMBIVALENT POSITION TAKEN BY BHUTTO ON THE SINDHI MOVEMENT. AS USUAL, THE CITIES ARE LARGELY OPPOSED TO THE REGIME, REFLECTING CONTINUED REFUGEE HOSTILITY TO THE PPP AND BHUTTO. URBAN HOSTILITY IS LIKELY TO INCREASE AS URBAN PROBLEMS ARE COMPOUNDED BY BURGEONING POPULATIONS AND OVERTAXED INADEQUATE SERVICES. HOWEVER, ORGANIZED LABOR IN KARACHI IS MOSTLY STILL IN PPP HANDS ALTHOUGH RADICALS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE PACE AND SCOPE OF PPP REFORMS. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IS AUIESCENT AND IN DISARRAY. THE LEFT NAP LEADERSHIP IS IN JAIL AND THE PIR OF PAGARO EVIDENTLY WITHDREW FROM POITICS WHEN GOVERNMENTAL PRESSURE WAS TURNED ON HIM.

9. IN NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, BHUTTO HAS EVIDENTLY NO PRESENT CHOICE BUT TO LIVE WITH THE THREE-WAY RULING COALITION OF INDEPENDENTS, LME FOLLOWERS OF QAIYUM KHAN, AND THE PPP, WITH HIS PARTY COMPRISING THE WEAKEST ELEMENT. GOVERNOR KHATTAK OSTENSIBLY SUPPORTS THE PPP DESPITE HIS NON-PARTY AFFILIATION, PRESUMABLY TO SHOW HIS FEALTY TO BHUTTO AND TO UNDERCUT HIS RIVAL FOR POWER, PROVINCIAL PPP LEADER SHERAPO. WHILE ONLY THE INDEPENDENTS HAVE MUCH REASON TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT, NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE APPEARS IN THE IMMEDIATE OFFING. NAP HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY INACTIVE EXCEPT FOR LACKLUSTER EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES IN THE RULING COALITION, WHILE ITS LEADER, WALI KHAN, HAS BEEN AWAY IN ENGLAND SINCE JANUARY.

10. IN BALUCHISTAN, BHUTTO' SUPPORTERS CONTROL THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION ALTHOUGH THE PPP HAS MADE LITTLE HEADWAY EXCEPT AMONG THE SETTLER COMMUNITY IN QUETTA. THE LIMITED INSURGENCY IN MARRI AND MENGAL TRIBAL AREAS CONTINUES AT ROUGHLY THE SAME LEVEL AS DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS, WITH NO END IN SIGHT. THE PRESENT GOVERNOR, THE KHAN OF KALAT, IS EVIDENTLY NOW CHAFING IN OFFICE LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR.

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NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IS LIKELY IN THE BALUCHISTAN SITUATION UNLESS BUTTO DOES THE UNEXPECTED BY RELEASING THE DETAINED BALUCH NAP LEADERS AND RESTORING THEIR CONTROL OVER THEIR TRIBES.

11. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE MILITARY TOWARD DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND THE BHUTTO REGIME DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS. PRESIDENT CHAUDHARY AND OTHER ADMINISTRATION SPOESMEN CONTINUE PERIODICALLY TO WARN THE SERVICES TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS, WHILE THE GOP SIMULTANEOUSLY GIVES EXTENSIVE AND LAUDATORY PUBLICITY TO THE ACTIVITIES OF SERVICE LEADERS SUCH AS ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF TIKKA KHAN. BHUTTO'S DISMISSAL OF THE AIR CHIEF OF STAFF, FOR THE STATED CAUSE OF PERVERTING MILITARY JUSTICE IN THE 1973 CONSPIRACY CASE, WAS GENERALLY FACORABLY RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC AND BY THE SERVICES THEMSELVES. THE LAST OF THE POWS FROM INDIA, INCLUDING GENERAL NIAZI, ONE OF THE SEVEN LIEUTENANT GENERALS IN THE PAKISTAN ARMY, ARRIVED HOME WITH MODEST FANFARE AND WITHOUT CAUSING ANY APPARENT TRAUMA IN ARMY CIRCLES. WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE OF ARMY REACTIONS TO THE PUNJAB PPP MUD-SLINGING, ALTHOUGH WE CAN PROBABLY ASSUME THAT THE MILITARY LOOKS WITH DISTASTE AT THE PERFORMANCE.

12. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ECONOMIC PICTURE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS; INFLATION CONTINUES BUT HAS DIMINISHED TO ABOUT A 20 PERCENT RATE, PAKISTAN'S RAPID EXPORT GROWTH HAS MODERATED CONSIDERABLY BUT PROSPECTS FOR FOODSTUFFS AND EXPORT CROPS ARE GOOD. THERE HAS BEEN REMARKABLY LITTLE REACTION TO INFLATION BEYOND GRUMBLING, EVEN AMONG THE MOST HARD-HIT INDUSTRIAL LABOR AND SALARIED CLASSES. HOWEVER, AN INCREASE IN STRIKES AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST IN THE MAJOR CITIES IN RESPONSE TO INFLATIONARY SPIRAL WOULD NOT BE UNEXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD TAKE ON A POLITICAL OR SPECIFICALLY ANTI-PPP COLORATION.

13. IN SUM, WE DON'T SEE MUCH SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL EQUATION OVER THE COMING MONTHS DESPITE THE FLURRY OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PUNJAB, ALTHOUGH THERE WILL DOUBTLESS BE SOME NEW FACES IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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AND PERHAS THE PROVINCES AND THERE COULD BE MORE VIOLENCE

THAN NORMAL IN URBAN AREAS.
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